



Inspiring News and Events

From the Reggio-Inspired Network of Minnesota

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Editor's Introduction

Lani Shapiro

Welcome to the spring issue of the Network's newsletter.

In order to create both a pathway for people new to Reggio-inspired work and deepen our shared thinking, we are launching a regular column, *Fundamentals*, to introduce and explore central principles of the Reggio Approach. We will inaugurate this feature by unpacking the *Image of the Child*, a concept that could serve as a lens through which you read this issue.

In *Getting to Belonging*, Rie Gilsdorf and Christy Spencer begin an important series of articles discussing the ways that Reggio pedagogy can support conversations about race. Jennifer Azzariti, who presented for us in January, shares *The Values and Virtues of Clay*. This generous reprint invites those who were unable to participate in-person into that experience. The Winter Conference, hosted at Macdonald Montessori, featured Amelia Gambetti from Reggio Emilia. Mary Jo Bjornson reflects on that event and implications for her teaching life. Jennie Knoot alerts readers to Reggio-related resources available through the Debra Fish Library. Be assured that books with titles in Italian have been translated to English. Peggy Novak draws our attention to the need to attract new educators to the field. These articles describe competent children, curious and thoughtful teachers and a responsive community.

Regular features at the end of each issue identify scholarship opportunities and a call for proposals. You can learn more about the North American Reggio Emilia Alliance and how to apply to current Reggio-inspired job postings.

As always, we are grateful for all the volunteer time and effort, seen and unseen, that goes into the work of the Network and to all of the newsletter contributors for their generosity, time and collaboration in making their thinking visible.

Fundamentals

Image of the Child

The Reggio Approach is a complex system of thought and practice with many dynamic entry points that interact; it is not a method, program or curriculum. ([LINK to Key Principles](#))

In this issue, we will begin to unpack the *image of the child*, introduced by Loris Malaguzzi and others who elaborate on this foundational idea.

There are hundreds of different images of the child. Each one of you has inside yourself an image of the child that directs you as you begin to relate to a child. This theory within you pushes you to behave in certain ways; it orients you as you talk to the child, listen to the child, observe the child. It is very difficult for you to act contrary to this internal image. For example, if your image is that boys and girls are very different from one another, you will behave differently in your interactions with each of them (Malaguzzi, 1994).

The educational project of Reggio Emilia offers an image of a child, *each child and all children*, as curious, competent learners who desire to be in relationship with others and the world. In this way, the Reggio Emilia Approach constructs a ‘rich’ child, with enormous unknown potential. This ‘rich’ child calls for comparably ‘rich’ parents and teachers, similarly disposed.

When we engage in dialogue with Reggio Emilia, we are asked to become aware of and think critically about the image of the child that we hold. This *image* resides mostly outside of our awareness and is challenging to make visible, even to ourselves. It is, however, revealed through action: the words we use; the nature of our expectations and how we convey them; how we organize time, space and materials; and how we prepare and use documentation.

The idea of the child that Malaguzzi introduced, and which the Reggio Emilia project has elaborated over decades, contests customary understandings. These children are not innocent, naive or cute. Nor are they passive, ‘at risk’ or constrained by standards.

The child is called the ‘rich’ child. But not ‘rich’ materially. Rather ‘rich’ in potential, strong, powerful, competent and, most of all, connected to adults and other children ... The ‘rich’ child is an active learner, seeking the meaning of the world from birth, a co-creator of knowledge, identity, culture, and values. (Moss, 2010).

The children that Malaguzzi described discuss and represent their thinking about identity, love, war, peace and liberty as well as light, shadow and color. We come to know these strong children through educators’ collaborative work of pedagogical documentation. “This is a gifted child, for whom we need a gifted teacher.”

One of the focal points of the Reggio Emilia philosophy... is the image of a child who, right from the moment of birth, is so engaged in developing a relationship with the world and intent on experiencing the world that he develops a complex system of abilities, learning strategies and ways of organising relationships. This is:

A child who is fully able to create personal maps for his own social, cognitive, affective and symbolic orientation.

A competent, active, critical child; a child who is therefore ‘challenging’, because he produces change and dynamic movement in the systems in which he is involved, including the family, the society and the school. A producer of culture, values and rights, competent in living and learning.

A child who is able to assemble and disassemble possible realities, to construct metaphors and creative paradoxes, to construct his own symbols and codes while learning to decode the established symbols and codes.

A child who, very early on, is able to attribute meanings to events and who attempts to share meanings and stories of meaning. (Loris Malaguzzi, as revisited by Rinaldi, 2006).

“...and most of all connected to adults and other children,” (Malaguzzi, 1993).

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Getting to Belonging Embracing Ambiguity and Rethinking What is Developmentally Appropriate

Rie Gilsdorf and Christy Spencer

Rie Algeo Gilsdorf, MS, MA, has broad experience as a principal, arts administrator, instructional coach, teacher of science and dance and parent in many settings, including the Reggio-inspired programs of Portland’s Opal School and The Blake School in Minneapolis. Rie is a past Board Co-Chair and Civic Engagement Committee Chair of the Reggio-Inspired Network of Minnesota and current member of its Resource Development Committee. She now provides racial equity seminars, coaching and consulting through Embody Equity (www.EmbodyEquity.com).

Christy Spencer, MA revels in playing with possibility. She is inspired by children’s curiosities and perspectives, and thus roots her practices in relationships, deep listening, designing dynamic learning environments, observation and pedagogical documentation. Christy has had an array of experiences in various Reggio-inspired contexts, including being a part of the kindergarten faculty at The Blake School and serving on the teacher education program advisory council, as well as being a mentor teacher at Boulder Journey School, a member of the RINM communications committee and board, the Learning and Impact Specialist at the Minnesota Children’s Museum and an educational consultant in a variety of settings. Current professional interests encompass exploring the intersection of design thinking and the Educational Project of Reggio Emilia, mindfulness practices, anti-racist theory, neuroscience around empathy and humanitarian projects focusing on children’s rights.

Belonging is a common theme across websites and pamphlets about early childhood programs. And who wouldn’t want to send their children to a place where the family feels a sense of belonging? Programs intend to create inclusive and equitable educational systems, yet often get stuck in the realm of intention. Efforts to

propose positive systemic change generally rely on well-crafted but superficial diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging (DEIB) statements, which can result in a display of aspiration without implementation. In a rush to action, these DEIB statements are often developed internally without taking the time to engage with the invaluable perspectives and insights of key stakeholders, including children. Without a road map, people may feel left uncomfortably floating on a cloud of ambiguous possibilities. Discomfort with ambiguity frequently leads to these statements being rooted in a “one and done” lesson or in a packaged curriculum that is delivered as a quick fix. What if we considered a different approach that embraces ambiguity as an asset?

Reggio-inspired educators structure children’s choices by creating finite holding spaces for their encounters. They provide provocations which open a multitude of possibilities, yet focus children’s work. We’re proposing a Reggio-inspired design process for adults to animate substantive change and actualize early childhood communities that are dialogic and democratic. Contrary to a “one and done” mindset, this learning process is iterative and generative.

What is a Reggio-inspired design process and how can it apply to antiracist practice?

In Reggio Emilia, “*progettazione*” describes the process of design and the development of educational projects. This is a “process of thought and action that takes into account the multiple viewpoints of children and adults and allows for doubt, uncertainty and errors as part of the rich context of learning,” (Reggio-Inspired Network of Minnesota, 2010). Reggio educators firmly state that every context is different, which necessitates a process that can respond to the uniqueness of each community. Neither the process nor the outcome can be standardized; this can be daunting, as is true for anti-racist practice. Reggio-inspired practice “requires a deep awareness and a suspension of our judgments and prejudices. It requires openness to change. It demands that we value the unknown and overcome the feelings of emptiness and precariousness that we experience when our certainties are questioned,” (Rinalidi, 2012).

The design thinking resources we encountered also offer steps that, like *progettazione*, invite multiple perspectives and reframe uncertainty and error as a necessary part of learning. These steps are so generative; there is always the probability that stakeholders will be surprised by the outcomes.

The broad strokes of the design process are:

Activating Open Mind - Listen to the experiences of all stakeholders. This requires suspending the voice of judgment.

Embracing Open Heart - Quiet the paralyzing inner critic that says “why bother?” or “it’ll never work,” and instead engage children’s sense of “Why not?” This requires redirecting the voice of cynicism.

Cultivating Open Will- Detach from the old ways of doing and let new possibilities arise. This requires letting go of the voice of fear.

Co-creating - Explore the future by doing, while remaining open to feedback about what’s working and not. The smallest practical idea will produce the clearest insights to inform next steps. This requires letting go of the voice of grandiosity.

Co-evolving - Create flexible infrastructure that adapts to an ever-evolving context. This requires letting go of the voice of certainty (Scharmer, 2018).

These five design thinking steps parallel what we ask of children: express and listen to ideas across multiple languages, embrace multiple perspectives with a sense of “why not,” disrupt habits and try new things, learn by doing and cope with variable circumstances.

With these steps in mind, we wonder how anti-racist practices might evolve if we trust the competencies of young children to understand difference and fairness in the United States? When afforded this trust, children might develop a deeper disposition to enact their rights and ultimately create a more equitable future. When trust is withheld, we inadvertently position children to perpetuate the status quo. Instead, we need to redesign environments of belonging for the future.

“Developmental appropriateness” perpetuates an antiquated, dominant narrative

In early childhood communities, there are competing narratives about what is developmentally appropriate with respect to race. The dominant narrative suggests that discussing race challenges young children’s innocence. A counter-narrative, that young children must engage in these conversations, is frequently asserted by BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Color) families. They share concern for young children’s innocence, yet feel obligated to initiate conversations about race, framed in ways that honor children’s sense of agency. This reflects parents’ views of their children as competent. Although an increasing number of White families and educators are beginning to acknowledge race with children, the dominant narrative is still that it’s not developmentally appropriate. This perpetuates a view of White children as not competent to have these conversations. When we embrace ambiguities as assets we can begin to dismantle the dominant narrative and trouble the discourse of what is deemed “developmentally appropriate.”

Dominant discourses are powerful because they operate outside of awareness. They make “assumptions and values invisible, turn subjective perspectives and understandings into apparently objective truths and determine that some things are self-evident and realistic,” (Moss, 2018). Most White parents are not accustomed to talking to their children about differences, perpetuating the dominant narrative that conversations about race are developmentally inappropriate. By contrast, BIPOC children’s experiences often include ongoing conversations about race, beginning at an early age, which may lead to greater social awareness and intercultural competence.

We revealed a nest of ambiguities: are children competent or aren’t they? Which children are competent in which circumstances? How can we leverage the strengths of each group to see the possibilities of competence for all children? Are we willing to acknowledge both children’s innocence and competence? Taking note of this ambiguity, we can begin to imagine a broader understanding of what “developmentally appropriate” could mean, leading to an expanded image of the child.

Conversations about difference fall into well-worn ruts unless we actively course-correct to be sure that people of all ages, races, genders and lived experiences have agency. For those who have lived many years within a dominant narrative, careful listening offers insight into the world in which children are growing up, which is not the same environment that today’s adults did; projecting adult understandings onto children’s experiences is futile. We can’t afford to wait until we or the children are “ready” to initiate and build upon this conversation. If we design conversations to connect with children’s awareness and lived experiences of race before they cement the dominant narrative, then they are able to play an active role in co-constructing a new narrative and co-creating equitable communities.

In a future issue, we’ll take up working with the uncertainty of emergent curriculum.

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The Values and Virtues of Clay

Jennifer Azzariti

Jennifer Azzariti's great passion is finding inroads and pathways to creativity in children and adults, making the connection between hands and minds a visible, cherished and respected anchor for learning and life. She has 30 years experience in Reggio-inspired education, starting at the Model Early Learning Center as the first studio teacher in the United States. Currently, she is the Atelierista and Pedagogical Director at St. John's Preschool and consultant to Lourie Center Head Start and Early Head Start Programs and other national programs. This year Jennifer is on sabbatical, deepening her personal practice and passion for ceramics at the Minnesota New Institute for Ceramic Education at the Northern Clay Center.

Paulo: *I want to make my name in “saving-people letters.” It’s because it’s very fun to save people, and I like to do that a lot.*

Peter: *We could draw a picture of a fire truck. No, we could make it out of clay. We can paint it or draw it on clay. We could get a big chunk of clay, big enough to write Paulo’s name.*

Paulo: *That’s a good idea.*



Paulo and Peter have been in the same class with their teachers for three years. During that time they have formed strong bonds with each other, their teachers, and the environment of the school. They know how to collaborate on a project—listen to each other, offer opinions, and share ideas. They are working together on an untraditional self-portrait, with a depth of trust that encourages the contributions and participation of Peter, yet does not diminish the excitement nor the definition of *self*-portrait as envisioned by Paulo. Paulo and Peter have an understanding of the materials in the classroom and the agency to realize their idea. They also have enough material knowledge and strategy to bring it to life. The materials were not determined by the teachers—other

self-portraits were made with wire, animation, drawing, collage—children had the opportunity and possibility to match the medium to the message they wanted to convey about themselves.

Paolo and Peter made a choice about the medium—(silently) weighing the benefits of each. They choose clay. It could have been for any number of reasons. Perhaps for them, it's much more fun to have a physical firetruck than a drawing of one. Perhaps they realized that if they make a mistake, clay is easily erased. Perhaps the possibility of using a “big chunk” feels appropriate for the scale of their idea. They knew different ways to write in clay—glazing (“We can paint it”) or incising (“or draw it”). Clay gave Paolo a language, a means of expression, to show himself to the world in a way that is unique to him; as a person who helps others, ‘it’s very fun to save people, and I like to do that a lot.’ He created a visual metaphor, to describe himself as a rescuer, a highly cognitive process:

Glucksburg (qtd. in Beaty and Silvia) writes that “...composing a metaphor involves making an abstract link between a topic and a vehicle by relating similar characteristics. Shared conceptual knowledge between the topic and vehicle must be identified for a metaphor to be comprehensible.”

How did Paolo and Peter build up a practical and conceptual knowledge of clay (and other mediums)? In their school, material literacy is not relegated to “art.” Materials are powerful everyday tools, vehicles for communication and expression, and are the backbone of the school environment. The classrooms are complex, filled with materials of all kinds, collected by teachers and contributions from families. Children explore rich structures and expressive potentials of the materials. Those explorations interweave organically with projects and experiences that stretch the cognition and creativity of the children.

From their first year at school, children are introduced to materials and techniques via meaningful and contextual experiences related to the life of the classroom, as a means to interpret their world. Teachers design experiences to meet new and familiar materials that elevate concepts and bring out certain material, cognitive, and expressive qualities. When young toddlers showed interest in the scratchy bark of trees around the school, teachers prepared clay slabs to impress on the trees, to capture the texture visually and physically. This offered a way of observing and documenting the uniqueness of each tree, and noticing differences. Children developed a closer and more intimate relationship to the trees, encountered a new technique of impressing, and played with concepts of memory, diversity, and transference.



All too often materials for young children are offered at extremes—purely sensory experiences, or didactic and formulaic pre-determined projects. Children need and deserve time to explore, and to get to know the rich structure of each language, and adults do too—it is essential that educators develop different kinds of material literacy in order to see and interpret children’s processes. When I say “purely” sensory I am not denouncing sensory experiences—but we often overlook the intelligence in the hand, and the cognitive processes involved in messing about. As Oliver Sacks writes in *Neurology and the Soul*: “Movement and sensation together

become the antecedent of meaning.” We must never forget that we first learn about ourselves and the world through our bodies.

Infants exploring clay for the first time reveal a fundamental grammar uncannily similar to a potter's. By-products—the fragments, coils, balls, indentations, gouges, scratches, and flattened bits, are symbolic expressions—tangible memories of gesture and dialogue between children and clay.



The physical encounter with clay is a generator of verbal language and a resource for socialization. By placing value on these beginnings, we acknowledge the relevance and intelligence of these initial interactions (perhaps even by preserving some of the artifacts instead of recycling them), and elevate the experience beyond sensory play. We recognize the extraordinary competency of very young children to formulate questions: “What is this? What do I do with it?” and construct new and original ideas.

Despite the values and virtues of expressive mediums like clay, math and the verbal language continue to dominate education. Imagine the possibilities if all languages were “treated with equal dignity,” (*Indications* 10), non-hierarchically, and rhizomatically? What if learning the language of clay was seen as important as learning the alphabet? What about dance? Or wire? Or light and shadow? How many different voices could emerge? How many new connections could be made that could open up creative ways of thinking and being? By expanding the definition of languages, and promoting complex interdisciplinary and holistic educational environments, we invest in building joyful, inventive, and intelligent citizens of all ages.

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This article was first published in the *Journal of the National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts* and appears here with its permission. Visit www.nceca.net to learn more.

Winter 2023 Conference at MacDonald Montessori with Amelia Gambetti

Mary Jo Bjornson, B.A.S.

Mary Jo's academic degree in child development included early childhood principles, theorists and curricula. She has been a licensed in-home family childcare provider since 1986 and is the owner/operator of Always Busy Growing Family Childcare which has had a focus on Montessori practices since the beginning. She was inspired and deeply moved by The Hundred Languages Of Children exhibit in Saint Paul in 2004 and subsequently became involved in the Reggio-Inspired Network of Minnesota. She's a champion for professionalism in in-home family childcare and sees it as a space for exploring Reggio ideas.

As I think about the Winter Conference, I reflect on my first encounter with the *Hundred Languages of Children* exhibit in St. Paul's City Hall in 2004. I went there on my own and it turned out that no one else was there that evening. I read each documentation panel one-by-one. As I read, I was filled with emotion and tears came to my eyes. The exhibit validated everything I believed about children and their learning. I wrote half a notebook full of their drawings and notes. I returned three times and brought a colleague, passionate to learn more. That was the beginning of my Reggio journey.

This winter's conference offered both rich presentations and the opportunity to walk the environment. Amelia Gambetti brought a video from Reggio Emilia that highlighted a 4- to 5-year-old child's birthday field trip. In this class, each child selects a place to visit with their classmates on their birthday. This little girl chose to visit the *piazza* (town square), because she loves to run with her friends amongst the columns. The children embraced the birthday child's wish and celebrated visiting the square.

In preparation for their trip, the children had discussions, made drawings, and expanded on what goes on in their city center. While exploring the *piazza*, children noticed the shadow of the columns on the sidewalk. These 4-year-olds had prior experience with light and shadow. Children brought sticks and stones with them and started placing the rocks, stones and sticks on the outer edge of a shadow, which created an outline of the corresponding column. When children ran out of their sticks and stones, one child placed her whole body on the remaining edge, as if to complete the outline. By the time they had finished their work, the children noticed that the shadow had moved, so they moved their stones and sticks out a few inches in order to follow the outline.

Later, back at their classroom, they discussed their experience. I wrote down their words, because I thought it was important to understand their deep thinking.

"It's there, but you can't hold it."

"It has one shape, but it has 100 more."

"It seems like it's going to obey you, then does what it wants."

"It comes and goes as it wants."

"It's part of the night, but it's part of the day."

"Shadow is made up of dark air and sky but also of the wind and earth."

"It's light and fragile but also very strong, because it stays if you squash it with a big stone, and it doesn't drown if you pour water on it."

"It's something we carry inside us, and it comes out of our feet, but also the sun makes it be born in the morning and die at night."

Studying the children's actions and words leads me to ponder the role of the teacher in the Reggio context: teachers respect children (letting them choose the birthday field trip), they listen deeply, notice and respond to children's curiosities, thoughtfully prepare materials, create time and space for children to revisit their experiences and respond to each others' thinking. Exploring shadows, a subject of study in Reggio Emilia, is a metaphor for the deep attention that those in Reggio practice.

The conference also included time to tour MacDonald Montessori School, both on Friday evening and Saturday. It is such a welcoming environment. The children's learning journeys are on every wall. There is an abundance of children's thinking, with images and text about their work along with evidence of collaboration among teachers, children and staff.

From my first experience with Reggio practice in 2004, I've been embracing Reggio philosophy as a family childcare provider with my children and families. I am grateful to Amelia Gambetti, Beth MacDonald and the staff of MacDonald Montessori School.



It was truly a blessing, being together with passionate teachers who celebrate the child each day.



The work is hard and at times very challenging. Amelia often says that with challenges come new opportunities for growth. Reggio work carries the voice of the future through even the darkest of times and gives us hope, because children give us hope.

Hello from Minnesota's Early Childhood Library!

Jennifer Knoot

Jennie Walker Knoot has served as librarian at the Debra S. Fish Early Childhood Resource Library since 2016. She graduated from St. Catherine University in 2014 with her MLIS and enjoys all aspects of librarianship but particularly relishes the internal high-five she gives herself each time she connects her patrons with the resources they need.

Have you heard about Minnesota's [Debra S. Fish Early Childhood Resource Library](#)? This hidden gem includes one of the strongest collections of early childhood resources in the state. It is a partner branch of the Saint Paul Public Library system, and its materials are available to all Minnesotans through MNLink. The circulating collection, in addition to a strong Reggio and Reggio-inspired collection, includes many early childhood

resources, including equitable teaching practices, trauma-informed teaching, educator wellness, developing and supporting relationships between educators and families, child development and many more.

The library also offers services such as educator consultations and research support, topical resource kit development and personal book shopper services to support program goals to ensure they have diverse and equitable book collections in the classroom.

Reggio at the Library

Thanks to an ongoing partnership (nearing a decade!) between our library and the Reggio-Inspired Network of Minnesota, educators have easy access to a large collection of [Reggio books & DVDs](#) through the public library system. You can browse the collection and make requests online at [SPPL.org](#). If you live outside of St. Paul, you can make requests from the collection using your regular public library card at [MNLink.org](#). Whether you are visiting our library as a St. Paul resident, from somewhere else in Minnesota or as a non-Minnesota resident, you can find everything you need to know about library cards [here](#).

If you'd like to check out the collection in person, our library's physical space is open by appointment. We remain available to assist you with research needs and requests for library materials by phone (651-641-3544) or email (librarian@thinksmall.org).

Thoughts on Attracting High Schoolers to the Profession of Early Childhood Education

Peggy Novak, Ed.D.

For many years, Peggy was an Early Childhood Educator in the North St. Paul area Early Childhood Family Education program. Currently, she is an adjunct instructor of Early Childhood Education at the University of Northwestern, St. Paul. She has an M.S. in Early Childhood Education from Concordia University and an Ed.D. in Leadership from St. Mary's University. She feels blessed to share many emergent learning experiences with her six young grandchildren.

What motivates high school graduates to consider a college degree in Early Childhood Education? With our country's escalating need for qualified early childhood educators, this is a critical question. In my role as an Early Childhood Education (ECE) professor, I'm able to listen to the stories of how our university students chose their ECE major. They often cite how experiences in early childhood educational settings during their high school years contributed to the choice of their major.

These collaborations between high schools and early childhood centers have a huge potential to positively influence high school students. For example, Becker High School offers the course, Practices in Early Childhood, where highschoolers are offered the opportunity, as the course's practicum component, to assist or shadow teachers at Becker's Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) program. Both Johannah and Niki (ECE graduates) stated that having this specific experience made them excited about the possibility of working in an early childhood setting. Johannah recalled that before the ECFE course experience, she knew she wanted to be a teacher but could only envision teaching in a traditional elementary classroom. The ECFE practicum helped Johannah to envision herself teaching in an early childhood setting, showing the exciting educational process of how young children learn and develop.

These stories, provided by our ECE majors, inform us of potential strategies to consider when attracting young people to pursue higher education degrees in ECE. Let's challenge ourselves to creatively develop new collaborations between high schools and early childhood educational settings. Let's think about how Early Childhood professionals can welcome and include high schoolers into work settings in meaningful roles.

Another avenue for reaching future early childhood educators was suggested by Madison, a university ECE senior. As a 15-year-old in Sioux Falls, SD, Madison was job hunting and realized there was a child development center close to her high school. Madison applied for a job and became a teaching assistant. For the last seven years she has continued to work at the child development center during her school breaks and in the summer. When it came time to decide her major, Madison thought, “I love what I’m doing—why don’t I just keep doing it?”

|Sponsorship Opportunity

The Reggio-Inspired Network of Minnesota (RINM) is making it possible to be a year-round sponsor for a \$100.00 donation.

The Network has been providing support to early childhood programs through its many opportunities for professional development since 2007. Most of these opportunities are free of charge to participants.

Individuals and programs can take advantage of Monthly Gatherings that provide professional development hours. There are also Documentation Labs, Book Study, “Let’s Talk” monthly Zoom gatherings and a collection of titles of Reggio-related books available through the Debra S. Fish Early Childhood library which is part of the St. Paul Library system.

Network communication is maintained through monthly up-date emails, the Quarterly Newsletter and a website filled with information about the Reggio Emilia Approach. Schools and centers have the opportunity to post job openings on the Network website. There are two scholarships available through the Network – an Education Scholarship, which can support attendance at training events given by staff from Reggio Emilia, and a Scholarship to attend the Network Monthly Gatherings.

Our newest project is the Loose Parts Lab. Teachers, parents and other community members can frequent Loose Parts and find materials that can be taken back to classrooms and homes where children can create, learn and explore new ideas with recycled and repurposed materials.

As a Sponsor of the Reggio-Inspired Network of Minnesota, your logo will be displayed on the Quarterly Newsletter, website and at Monthly Gatherings. Your logo will be associated with the work of RINM and will make your organization stand out and be recognized as a program associated with quality!

If you would like to become a sponsor for the 2022-2023 year, please [complete this linked form](#) and send it to Reggio-Inspired Network of Minnesota, 525 Pelham Blvd. N., Saint Paul, MN, 55104 with a payment of \$100.00. You may also donate the \$100.00 by going to the website and clicking on the donate button. If you have questions, please contact Marty Watson at martywatson549@gmail.com.

Reggio-Inspired Network of Minnesota Scholarships

RINM Education Scholarship

The Reggio-Inspired Network of Minnesota's Education Scholarship is available to those interested in learning more about the Reggio Approach. Everyone is invited to apply at any time of the year (a minimum of 6 weeks before an event you plan to attend). This scholarship may be used for registration costs to local, national or international Reggio-inspired workshops and conferences. Preference will be given to professional development opportunities where educators from the schools of Reggio Emilia, Italy are presenting. Funds are limited and awards are made at the discretion of the Reggio-Inspired Network of Minnesota Board.

[RINM Education Scholarship Application](#)

Monthly Gatherings Scholarship

This scholarship, established by the Network's Board, is in honor of Sandy Burwell, a founding member of the Reggio-Inspired Network of Minnesota. Sandy has been particularly devoted to the Saturday Gatherings. The dates for the Monthly Gatherings Scholarship cover a full calendar year, from January to December each year. Apply now!

[Monthly Gathering Scholarship Application](#)

Calls for Participation

“Participation, in fact, is based on the idea that reality is not objective, that culture is a constantly evolving product of society, that individual knowledge is only partial; and that in order to construct a project, especially an educational project, everyone's point of view is relevant in dialogue with those of others, within a framework of shared values. The idea of participation is founded on these concepts: and in our opinion, so, too, is democracy itself.”

Paola Cagliari, Angela Barozzi and Claudia Giudici

Join Us

The Reggio-Inspired Network of Minnesota is an all-volunteer non-profit 501c(3) organization. Most of our work occurs in committees, where issues are studied, proposals developed and activities implemented. We are looking for a wide range of people with varied skill sets to join our work. Critically, we need people who are willing to collaborate, to do some planning up front, jump in and learn as they go. We would like to hear from you. There are no fees or dues involved, just an interest in learning and growing together. Help us grow our active and vibrant collaborative.

Committees:

Resource Development

To develop the diverse sources of finance and material support to sustain the Network

Business: budgeting, grant writing, fundraising

Contact Marty Watson martywatson549@gmail.com

Outreach & Growth

To plan events, promote the growth of Reggio-inspired knowledge and practice and expand the Network

Event planning, knowledge of the Reggio Emilia educational project, community organizing

Contact Heidi Wolf hwolf@bsmschool.org

Loose Parts Laboratory Materials Center

To develop and grow offerings of materials and workshops

Curate, maintain and display materials

Contact the committee at loosepartslabmn@gmail.com

Communications

To make the work of the Network visible, coordinate communication, improve tools to highlight and elevate the work of the Network and build relationships

Writing, editing, research, graphic arts, social media, information/project management

Contact Lani Shapiro lani.shapiro@gmail.com

Civic Engagement (currently dormant, but could rise with interest and leader)

To provide information and resources to policy makers, educators and other citizens in order to influence education policy and promote learning through inquiry

Knowledge of early childhood and/or K-12 education policy and evidence-based research to support the Reggio approach

Contact Patti Loftus pattiroseloftus@gmail.com

If you are interested in volunteering to support the Network, please email the chair of the relevant committee. If you have general questions, or would like to contribute to the Network in another way, please contact board members at reggioinspiredmn@gmail.com.

Share your knowledge or experience

The Outreach and Growth Committee has started to plan the Monthly Gatherings for the 2023 - 2024 school year. The Network broadened during the pandemic as we met via the Zoom platform, and we are excited to continue a virtual component for all our gatherings. This means that you can participate as a host/presenter even if you are not living in the Minneapolis/ St. Paul area! Presentations need to include and build on Reggio principles and may include past or current work or area of study. Presentations often include a variety of approaches, including discussion, hands-on experiences and video/or Powerpoint.

Please consider this as a personal challenge to lead or co-lead a Network event. We would like to incorporate your experiences into upcoming events.

Some questions to get you thinking:

- What have you been exploring and learning with your children?
- What conversations have given you insight into their theories?
- How are the Hundred Languages expressed in your setting?
- What strategies, intentions and hypotheses have you discussed as a staff?
- What have you struggled with and created solutions around?
- What other learning stories could you tell?

A stipend of up to \$200 is given for a 2-3 hour Gathering, with additional funds if your presentation has Parent Aware/Develop MN approval.

Proposals for presentations will be accepted until June 1, 2023. We look forward to engaging with participants from all over the US and the world! Here is the link: <https://forms.gle/pHMzedRfNoxd9NTJ6>

Call for Photographs

Do you have strong images of local Reggio-inspired work? We are looking for photos that could be used on our website or in upcoming issues of the newsletter. For future issues, we're inviting images that feature "teacher as researcher" and the "hundred languages." The school or organization will be credited. Submit jpegs, with a brief note about who, where and when the photos were taken, to reggioinspiredmn@gmail.com. Permissions are

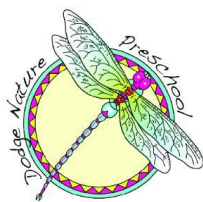
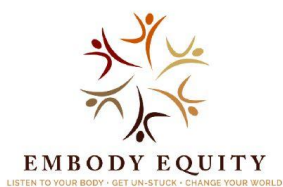
necessary for all photos that include children or adults whose faces are recognizable.

NAREA

Be sure to check out the events offered by NAREA, the North American Reggio Emilia Alliance. NAREA exists to connect early childhood educators and advocates together in discovering, interpreting and promoting Reggio Emilia inspired education. If you are a member, you will receive another discount. With Zoom classes, there are many more opportunities to become involved with the Reggio Emilia educators in Italy. For more information, visit <https://www.reggioalliance.org/anarea/>.

Job Opportunities

Click here for current job postings: www.mnreggio.org/jobsforum



For more news and events visit us at www.mnreggio.org and like us on [Facebook!](#)

Send us an email: reggioinspiredmn@gmail.com

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